



EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Interpretation of the interaction between teachers and students through the children's drawings – A drawing study: Drawing a family

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Parallel paper session

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Contribution

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In the world and in Slovenia, family life has been changing intensively lately. It is more and more difficult to define a family, as it has been undergoing changes all the time.

In general, the majority of the newer sociological family life researches find experiencing family and family issues as a basic and defining family dimension. Thus, the biggest change in the family concept occurred in the subjective meaning ascribed to intimate relationships, and not in formal or family ties. Featherstone (2004 in Renner et al. 2006: 22) argues that »what the family is essentially depends on what it does. Today, the family and marriage are losing a key monopoly position, the proportion of population living in nuclear families is getting smaller. Living together out of wedlock is less and less stigmatised. The process of family de-institutionalisation in the contemporary societies is understood as the process of decreasing the meaning of marriage and the family as an institution, but not as the disappearing of the family at all. «

In the paper, we want to find out how the mentioned changes of family life are shown in school practice in the family representation through the child's drawing, as the child's drawing is included in school and kindergarten curricula. A drawing can be used to stimulate and express experiences. Alerby and Elidottir (in Alerby, Istenič Starčič, 2008) emphasised that different „non-verbal languages“, such as for example drawings, in turn evoke reflections, which are connected to lived

experience.

The child can represent the real world, but he or she can also choose the substitute or phantasy ones. Through the child's art creation his or her individual identity can be formed. Mietkiewicz and Schneider (in Brassac, Mietkiewicz 2010, 476) claim that »through his or her drawing, each child describes its own perception, its point of view about the ties that make up the family, the elective closeness and the omissions that reveal the child's specific position in the family network«. It was also found out that siblings (including several pairs of twins) will not come out with the same graphical representation when asked to draw their family.

On the other hand, the teachers also, according to their beliefs and experiences, recognise and respond to the students' drawings and their commentaries.

To find out how it is in practice, we applied the following research questions: how the students experience their family, what dilemmas the students deal with when they draw the family, how the teachers respond to the possible students' dilemmas when they draw, what dilemmas the teachers deal with when the students draw the family.

Method

In the research, we applied the study of the drawings and different types of family perceptions based on the phenomenology tradition. The mentioned standing points made the research of the perception of families' diversity possible. We wanted to find out if the student's perception suits the actual family structure in which the student lives.

The children who were included in the study live in south east of Slovenia, and were all aged between six and nine years old. A total of 80 children, 45 boys and 35 girls, took part in the study. The parents were informed about the research, and they agreed in writing to accept the participation of their children. The study lasted for two years. In the first year, the students were asked to draw their family members. After they finished, they were asked to comment the drawing (who they draw as a family member). In the second year, they were asked to draw when they feel good in their family. Again, we tried to obtain the child's commentaries upon the drawings when finished. We will analyse and categorise the drawings according to their common traits.

Expected Outcomes

We suppose that children deal with different thoughts and questions when drawing the family, e. g. who to draw as a family member in the case of the re-organised family, divorced family etc. The students probably experience differently the family representation. It can be a less or more pleasant experience. We suppose that the teacher can find themselves in different situations where they have to clarify what they expect from the students who live in different family types, when interpreting the pieces of art they have probably to take counsel from the student. We wish for the teachers to be sensitive to the mentioned issue and to search for solutions that will be acceptable for them and for their students.

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Pobegi